



Interzones: Black/White Sex Districts in Chicago and New York in the Early Twentieth Century

Kevin Mumford

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Interzones is an innovative account of how the color line was drawn--and how it was crossed--in twentieth-century American cities. Kevin Mumford chronicles the role of vice districts in New York and Chicago as crucibles for the shaping of racial categories and racial inequalities.

Focusing on Chicago's South Side and Levee districts, and Greenwich Village and Harlem in New York at the height of the Progressive era, Mumford traces the connections between the Great Migration, the commercialization of leisure, and the politics of reform and urban renewal. *Interzones* is the first book to examine in depth the combined effects on American culture of two major transformations: the migration north of southern blacks and the emergence of a new public consumer culture.

Mumford writes an important chapter in Progressive-era history from the perspectives of its most marginalized and dispossessed citizens. Recreating the mixed-race underworlds of brothels and dance halls, and charting the history of a black-white sexual subculture, Mumford shows how fluid race relations were in these "interzones." From Jack Johnson and the "white slavery" scare of the 1910's to the growth of a vital gay subculture and the phenomenon of white slumming, he explores in provocative detail the connections between political reforms and public culture, racial prejudice and sexual taboo, the hardening of the color line and the geography of modern inner cities.

The complicated links between race and sex, and reform and reaction, are vividly displayed in Mumford's look at a singular moment in the settling of American culture and society.

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